

THE CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of aligning a putter, comprising the steps of:
5 providing a putter having a head, a heel, a toe, and a planar striking face comprising a removable reflecting surface for receiving and reflecting incident light;
providing a light source separate from the putter head;
directing light from the light source towards the reflecting surface such that the reflective surface is illuminated with and reflects a portion of the light; and
10 detecting the reflected light with a reference device.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the light source is a laser.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the reflecting surface is a mirrored surface, highly-
15 polished fused silica, highly-polished glass, or a beam splitter.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the reference device comprises an opaque surface, graph paper, a ruler, a photomultiplier tube, an avalanche photodiode, or a charge-coupled device.
- 20 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the light is collimated, focused, or both.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the planar striking face has a loft of between about 2 degrees and about 7 degrees.
- 25 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the loft is about 4 degrees.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein a spacer or a shim is disposed between the planar striking face and the reflecting surface.

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9. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
determining the location of the reflected beam on the reference device relative to a central point prior to a golfer making a putting stroke; and
correcting the orientation of the putter so that the reflected beam is directed at the center
5 of the reference device.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the reference device is a beam splitter oriented such that a first fraction of the light is reflected towards the reference device and a second fraction of the light is redirected perpendicular the incident light.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the redirected light strikes the ground below the striking face such that the golfer may align a putting stroke path.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the reference device is a photosensitive array and the reflected light incident upon the photosensitive array generates a signal capable of being
15 transferred to an output device.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the output device comprises a personal computer, a monitor, an oscilloscope, or a personal data assistant.

14. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
providing a second reference device located below the putter head.

15. A method of aligning a putter, comprising the steps of:
25 providing a putter having a head, a heel, a toe, and a planar striking face having a loft of about 4 degrees and comprising a reflecting surface for receiving and reflecting incident light, the reflecting surface being oriented vertically by a shim or a spacer;
providing a light source separate from the putter head;
directing light from the light source towards the reflecting surface such that the reflective
30 surface is illuminated with and reflects a portion of the light;
detecting the reflected light with a reference device; and

comparing the reflected light to a central location on the reference device so that a golfer may determine the orientation of the putter head.

16. A system for aligning a putter, comprising:

5 a putter comprising a head, a heel, a toe, and a planar striking face comprising a removable reflecting surface for receiving and reflecting incident light;

a light source for providing the incident light, the light source being separate from and directed towards the reflecting surface; and

a reference device for receiving reflected light from the reflecting surface.

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17. The system of claim 16, wherein the reflecting surface refracts a portion of the incident light onto a second reference device.

18. The system of claim 16, wherein the reference device is a photosensitive array and the
15 reflected light incident upon the photosensitive array generates a signal capable of being transferred to an output device.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the output device comprises a personal computer, a monitor, an oscilloscope, or a personal data assistant.

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20. The system of claim 16, wherein the reference device detects and compares the reflected light to a central location on the reference device so that a golfer may determine the orientation of the putter head.